

Most of you were able, and I think it was difficult, to show commendable restraint in not jumping to any conclusions about who did this terrible thing. And most of you have really done a great deal to help the American people find some renewed strength and energy. And I thank you for that. And I hope in the days ahead you will be able to continue it.

As this story unfolds, I would ask you to continue to return to Oklahoma City, to update our country on how the families who have suffered so much are rebuilding their lives, and to remind us about the countless heroes we have all seen there. The terrible people who did this thing do not deserve to be celebrities, although they will become famous. But the victims and their families and the people who have labored, they don't deserve to be forgotten.

The heroes of this tragedy embody the unbreakable spirit of our Nation. They should always be remembered, the hundreds of rescue workers who defied the rain, the cold, the heartache, and a very real risk to their own lives. People like Rebecca Anderson, a nurse with four children, whose parents still live in my home State, who was hit by a piece of concrete and later died trying to help others. Even in death she continued to serve the living by giving her heart to save the life of a man from Oklahoma, and one of her kidneys to save the life of a woman from New Mexico.

Now, folks, that is the real America. Sometimes all of us forget it a little bit. Sometimes all of us are too bound up in what we are doing. But this country is bound together in a way that the people like those who committed those crimes in Oklahoma can never understand. And I know our Government is not perfect, and I know it makes mistakes. But this is a very free country and a very great country. And a lot of the people who are out there complaining about it today would not even be able to do what they do in the way they do it in most of the other democracies in the world today. And we should never forget it.

I say this tonight not to pour cold water on this wonderful evening and not because I haven't enjoyed it—I think I laughed harder tonight than anybody else here—but be-

cause as long as this work is going on, I think I owe it to you to tell you for all of our sometimes conflicting interests, I am really proud of the work the American press corps did in bringing this to the American people. And the work is not over. The understanding is not over.

We have a lot of difficult decisions to make in the weeks and months ahead. As you know, I feel very strongly that the country should adopt stronger measures against terrorism. It will be debated in the Congress. Some of the measures are complex. You will have to explain them to the American people. I ask only that in all of this, you never forget the human dimension that you have so skillfully and heroically brought home to all the people of this country.

We are going to get through this, and when we do, we'll be even stronger. We've been around here now for more than 200 years because almost all the time more than half of us wind up somehow doing the right thing. And we will do the right thing again.

I'd like to close with words written by the wonderful poet, W.H. Auden, over 50 years ago, "In the deserts of the heart, let the healing fountain start. In the prison of his days, teach the free man how to praise."

We praise America tonight, and we thank you for bringing it home to us in such a powerful way in these last days.

Good night, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:47 p.m. at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Ken Walsh, outgoing president, White House Correspondents Association, and entertainer Conan O'Brien.

Remarks to the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in New York City

April 30, 1995

Foreign Minister Peres, thank you for your powerful words, the example of your life, and your tireless work for peace. Rabbi Lau, Governor Pataki, Senator Moynihan, Senator D'Amato, members of the New York congressional delegation, Speaker Silver, Ambassador Rabinovich and members of the Diplomatic Corps, Mr. Mayor—and of course, my

friend Benjamin Meed. I thank you and your wife for joining us and helping Hillary and me and, through us, the entire United States last year to understand the deepest and profoundest meaning of the Warsaw Uprising.

This year we mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust. Since Biblical times, 50th anniversaries have had special meanings. Our English word "jubilee" comes to us from the Hebrew word for that anniversary. And the Scripture tells us that every 50th year is to be holy and the land should be left fallow and slaves freed upon the blowing of a shofar. It was a year in the Scriptures that closed an era and began another.

We think of such things here on the end of this century and the beginning of a new millennium, but in profound ways there can be no such closure for the half-century after the Holocaust. For all of those who lived through it and all of us who came after, the Holocaust redefined our understanding of the human capacity for evil. Anyone who has stood in that tower of photographs in the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, who has seen those unforgettable, warm, expressive faces from that small Lithuanian town, anyone who has seen the horror even in pictures knows that we must now and never allow the memory of those events to fade.

The Bible also made the link between memory and deed, enjoining us so often to remember the years of slavery in Egypt and the acts of the wicked and then to act morally. Today we must remember those years of radical evil as though it were a commandment to do so because, as we have seen, hatred still flourishes where it has a chance. Intolerance still lurks, waiting to spread. Racist violence still threatens abroad and at home.

We are taught in our faith that as much as we might regret it, deep within the human spirit there is, and will always remain until the end of time, the capacity for evil. It must be remembered, and it must be opposed.

The commandment to remember is especially great now because, as the Foreign Minister said, this has been a very bloody century. And soon, the living memory of the Holocaust will pass. Those of us, then, who were

born after the war will then have to shoulder the responsibility that the survivors have carried for so long: to fight all forms of racism, to combat those who distort the past and peddle hate in the present, to stand against the new forms of organized evil and counter their determination to use and to abuse the modern miracles of technology and openness and possibility that offer us the opportunity to build for our children the most remarkable world ever known but still carry, within these forces, the seeds of further destruction.

I have hope for the future because our Americans are embracing the responsibility of memory. In the 2 years since the Holocaust Memorial Museum opened, more than 4 million people—more, many more than were expected—have visited that remarkable place. The daily number of visitors is still increasing, and about 8 of every 10 Americans who visit are not Jews. Twenty thousand school groups have been there already, and with the help of the museum, some 40,000 teachers around our country now teach about the Holocaust in their classes. Perhaps those children one day will be the kind of adults who would stop and ask why and do more if someone ever came to take a friend or a neighbor away.

If so, we will have been true to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and we will have pressed the cause of decency and human dignity yet one more step forward. This is our task: making memory real and making memory a guide for our own actions.

I am reminded of the extraordinary visit I had last year to the Old Jewish Cemetery in Prague, that great forest of stones. As you know, everyone who visits there, or any Jewish cemetery, puts a stone on a grave, adding to memory, never subtracting from it. For me, someone new to the experience, it was an overwhelming symbol of how we all ought to think and live.

Over the centuries, memory has been built there in Prague in a very deep and profound way, in the city that Hitler wanted to turn into a museum for what he hoped would be an extinct people. We, too, now must add to those stones, stones of remembrance, like this day-long gathering, stones that add to the memory of the victims and to our knowledge of the barbarism that claimed them.

Ultimately, I wanted to be here today after all our country has been through in these last days, because you have taught me that the vigilance of memory is our greatest defense, and I thank you all for that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. at Madison Square Garden. In his remarks, he referred to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of Israel; Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazic Jews of Israel; Gov. George E. Pataki of New York; Sheldon Silver, New York State House speaker; Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York City; and Benjamin Meed, president, American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, and his wife, Vladka.

Remarks at the World Jewish Congress Dinner in New York City
April 30, 1995

Thank you very much. Thank you, Edgar. Foreign Minister Peres, thank you for being here, for your visionary leadership, your wise words. To all of the friends of Edgar Bronfman who are here from Canada and from around the world, I am profoundly honored to be with you this evening and to receive this wonderful Nahum Goldmann Award.

I know he was the president of the World Jewish Congress, the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency, Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations. Every group I can think of associated with Edgar Bronfman, except the Seagram's Group—[laughter]—we would all like to be president of that, thanks to the work he has done. I would remind you, Edgar, that I'm a relatively young man without a great deal of job security. I hope you will keep me in mind in the future. [Laughter]

We gather—I wish you wouldn't laugh quite so much at that. [Laughter] We gather tonight to celebrate the accomplishments of an extraordinary man. For all of you, your presence here is testimony to your shared values, your shared goals, and to the countless lives that Edgar Bronfman has touched. In these years of great change and opportunity and of great anxiety and even fear, in years of too much cynicism, the Jewish community has found in Edgar Bronfman the rarest of combinations, a leader armed with pas-

sion for his people's cause and endowed with the strength to act on that passion. As president of the World Jewish Congress and a citizen of the world, Edgar Bronfman has given life to Emerson's observation that an institution is the length and shadow of one man.

In the long years when the Soviet Union imprisoned Jews within its borders, many raised their voices in anger, but Edgar journeyed to Moscow to win their release. When millions in Russia and all across Eastern Europe won their freedom from tyranny's grip, many rejoiced, but Edgar took the lead in helping Jewish communities reclaim their proud spiritual and physical heritage that many feared had been lost forever.

And as a new era of peace dawns in the Middle East, many celebrate. But Edgar works every day to reconcile the people of Israel and the Palestinians and to bring new life to ancient lands. Wherever Jews dream of a better life and wherever those dreams are threatened, Edgar Bronfman is sure to be found.

A week ago today, Hillary and I went to Oklahoma City to mourn with and pay our respects to the victims and families of the terrible bombing there. Last summer, Edgar undertook a similar journey of his own when he flew to Argentina just hours after hearing of the bombing of the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires. There in the midst of the rubble and the ruins, he called on leaders, visited the injured, spoke to the children, told them to stand firm against those who traffic in fear, to hope and not hate, but to work every day to turn that hope into reality. In these times, that is a lesson every citizen of every continent should learn and take to heart. It echoes loudest in the ears of those who have known so much terror and so much sorrow.

As was said earlier today by my friend Benjamin Meed, we mark the time when half a century ago the most terrible chapter in the history of the Jewish people was brought to a close. Unfortunately, 50 years later, merchants of hate still live among us here at home and around the world. Of course, we cannot compare their actions or their capabilities to the horrors that were visited upon the Jewish people, but they do practice and they do preach violence against those who